

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The Political Security Police were alerted on 17 February because Lt. General Netr Kemayodhin had been in Bangkok for several weeks prior to 17 February. Phao Sriyanon remarked while at dinner with high naval officers that he would search the Naval Training Center near Samut Prakan for General Netr. Lt. Comdr. Pradist Pulket, the commanding officer of the station, coldly remarked that if the police attempted to enter the reservation, the Navy would start shooting. This incident explains the Navy order forbidding sailors to come ashore in Samud Prakan and Bangkok.*
2. The Royal Navy also took a serious view of the fatal shooting of a naval officer, a lieutenant, near the Suriyanon Hotel in which Phao's brother, Chat Sriyanon, was involved along with Khun Chamnong's bodyguard. Chamnong's bodyguard confessed that he was responsible for the shooting. Phao attempted to hush up the affair, but was thwarted when the Phin Thai printed the story.**
3. General Netr had twice been unsuccessful in promoting a government change. Phao, fearing such action again, recommended and effected the transfer of twenty police officers. He picked the right ones, for most of them were active participants in the October plot who had escaped prosecution. Their transfers were to areas such as the northeast where they could be relied upon to become involved in plots again. This time, however, Phao relied on a large network of planted informers to nip any future coup. Those transferred included Samai Chaman Sripet, who was arrested and detained together with Major General Chamnien Vasanasomsid, the deputy chief of police, and Captain Chaum Sindhvachiva, a former naval lieutenant, who for eight years was police aide de camp to Pridi Banomyong. It was also planned that Luang Pichit be transferred from Songkhla to Bangkok. Pichit's transfer was considered a weak point in Phao's plan as he is definitely pro-Khuang rather than pro-Phibul, and refused to tolerate meddling in police affairs. Many high ranking police officers, including General Phao, slept at the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) every night since approximately 12 February. A special suppression squad was held in readiness.

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4. On the night of Saturday, 26 February, Adul Aduldet Charat observed with "abstract aloofness" the massing of army forces at the Royal Plaza, which is opposite his residence.
5. The two Chinese held by the police for being in the Grand Palace during the attempted coup are definitely not Communists. They turned out to be coffee vendors from nearby stalls who normally frequent the Palace area, and have since been released by the police.
6. The Government report concerning the presence of "farangs" in the Royal Palace and in the company of "unknown parties" (Free Thai) is thought, by a source close to the local Communists, to be a propaganda stratagem wherein a member of the Russian Legation staff could be accused of involvement -- this, just in case the Government needed a "ready" story.
7. The 26 February plot to overthrow the government was "tipped off" by Suri Thongwanit, the editor of Siam Thai, who was responsible for the radio broadcast at Phya Thai station. At the moment of the broadcast, Vajarajai's group was in the palace attempting to break into the Ministry of Finance safes.
8. A flare was to have been the actual signal for tanks to enter Suan Kularb which would have forced the November coup group to sign the agreement permitting the government change on 23 February. ***
9. On the night of 26 February, Admiral Luang Sindhu Kamonnawin and Admiral Sangworn Yuthakit quarrelled as a result of Sindhu's urging that the Navy go step by step rather than commit itself fully should resistance develop.
10. Royal Marine forces "captured" Vajarajai and later arranged his escape, despite Admiral Polasin Thawanat's order that he be executed.
11. Free Thai supporters expressed the opinion that Phibul was probably sincere in his plans to join the coup forces, but found himself in no physical position to carry out this plan when the moment came.
12. Luang Chatrakarn Kasol attended the American University Association (AUA) program on the evening of 26 February. He confirmed the fact that he was there at 10:45 p.m. At some time during the affair he departed for the Central Police Station and returned shortly after midnight. Chat announced that the police position was neutral, and refused to accompany General Phao when the latter called for him at the AUA meeting. ****

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- * [REDACTED] Comment. After the abortive October 1948 coup, Netr, along with Boonlom (Pramote), former Crown Property Director, Pridi's brother Arthakit, and several others, for whom the police had arrest warrants, made their headquarters in a betel-nut plantation approximately two miles north of Siricha (in the Chonburi-Sattahip area). This sanctuary was arranged for them by Admiral Taharn Khamhiran, and the road leading to it was under heavy marine guard. From there, Netr and the others made frequent trips into Bangkok. It was quite obvious to any interested observer that the Navy was keeping something "hot" in the plantation area.

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[REDACTED] Comment. Although this murder had subsequent political significance, it was initially the result of a "gang-type" dispute over an illegal gambling organization in which Phao's brother is involved.

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[REDACTED] Comment. For several weeks prior to the abortive coup, it was widely rumored in Bangkok that a green flare was to be the signal for an uprising against the Government. On the evening of 23 February, while Phibul and several of his cabinet ministers were at a buffet dinner at the American Ambassador's residence, such a flare appeared over the eastern part of the city. Phibul and the ministers were notably upset by it and shortly after left the party. On the same evening, two junior army officers were placed under arrest by the Military Police for the unauthorized movement of two tanks. It is not unlikely that one section of the coup forces started to move prematurely.

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[REDACTED] Comment. The Police in evidence on the streets of Bangkok on 27 and 28 February carried no weapons, which lends credence to Chat's "neutrality order." The special suppression units under Phao's command, however, "took over" Amphorn Gardens and turned it into an armed camp which they were still occupying two weeks after the coup attempt.

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